

M'DOUGALL RECOLLECTS AN INTERVIEW WITH THE LATE KWANG SU.

THE alleged death of the Emperor of China by poison, the red hot iron, or whatever it was, recalls to my mind an interesting interview I had with him early last Summer. One bright June morning, when the glassing blossoms filled the whole province with aromatic perfumes and the fields of cooling gave forth the scent of a 5 o'clock tea, I strolled to the Palace accompanied by Ah Foe Aoe, an interpreter, and provided with a letter of introduction from the American Minister which instantly procured me an audience.

The Emperor was a small young man with a gamboge-colored countenance, and was evidently trying to raise a mustache, as he felt for it occasionally in a nervous manner.

SOME VIEWS OF CHINA'S LATE RULER.

HIS TROUBLES WITH HIS RELATIVES, LIVING AND DEAD.

He looked at me pityingly a moment. "I gather from your remarks," he said, "that you have never been married or you wouldn't have made a break like that. When a man has so many wives that he can only know them by their numbers, matrimony is a failure. Write that down in your notebook. No, there is only one redeeming feature in a Chinese Emperor's wedded life—there is no mother-in-law element."

"What are your ideas as to Reform?" I asked. "I want to catch up with the procession and get alongside of the band. I want to see the Chinese nation playing baseball, poker and golf, riding in trolley cars, buying patent medicines, reading three newspapers per diem, raising chin whiskers, wearing dress suits and bicycle socks, and drinking gin rickeys."

"I believe in honest politics, perfect finances and light taxes, and the Dowager Empress says I'm 'nutty,' that outside of Philadelphia such things are impossible."

"She's nearly right," I said; "that is, about the impossibility of."

"Nonsense!" ejaculated the young potentate. "She has not a corner on brains, even if she does control the output of slaves in the imperial palace, which is all that gives her the cluck she has here."

"But your respected mother," I interrupted. "She isn't my mother, bless your heart. She was the 'secondary wife,' a sort of marital understudy to the wife of Hien Fung—the last Emperor but one, I think he was. Her marrying into our family has caused all the trouble. When anybody happens to disagree with the old lady, even on a question of no importance, he is suddenly afflicted with appendicitis, paresis, anaemia, epilepsy, or some other quick and fatal disease, and the next thing you see of him he is officiating as leading man at his own obsequies."

"This is terrible!" I remarked, with a polite shudder.

"Isn't it? And that's not the worst. She's Boss here—sole, entire and absolute Boss. Talk about Platt or Croker. They are not even near it! What she says is the official statement. Propels itself. Look there."

I turned my eyes in the direction he indicated. Two dozen assorted sizes of bottles were arranged in an ornately carved ivory cabinet, all wearing

the skull and cross-bone label with the word "poison" in red letters. "If I offend her," the Emperor said, in an injured tone, "she will order me to sample one of those! It's a fact," he added, seeing my surprise, "and I'd just have to do it, too. That's one of our old customs that I'd like to see altered. Then, besides those, she keeps some thirty iron

rods heated to a white heat and a committee of slaves authorized to jab me with them if I hold opinions differing from hers regarding baptism, dieting or the currency question."

"This makes the job of being an Emperor of China one for which there should be few applicants, I should judge," I ventured to remark.

"I suppose," he answered with some show of vanity, "that I'm the hardest worked man in the Empire. I have to rise at 2 o'clock in the morning and go to bed at 5:30 in the afternoon. Most of my time is spent jossing in the Joss house, as I have to put up several hundred balloons every year before the memorial tablets of my numerous ancestors of the last three thousand years, and celebrate forty-seven sacrifices to different plaster-of-paris, ivory, brass and porcelain gods, with imitation emerald eyes, as I'm High Priest as well as Emperor."

"I nearly caused a revolution only last month by releasing some two thousand of these old, back number balloons and letting them drift off in the blue empyrean. The Dowager tore around dreadfully for awhile, but I calmed her by telling her that I had taken an interest in Li Hung Chang's balloon factory and wanted to boom its stock by creating a demand, so that time I didn't have to try one of her cyanide cocktails."

"It's no picnic, I assure you. I'd rather be a street commissioner in Hong Kong any time."

"Still," I ventured to suggest, "you are not compelled to hustle for your meals like a mere artist."

"Meals! Now you touch a burning question. I'm working as Emperor simply for my board and lodging and it can't be presented in any other light. I've nominally eight thousand slaves and yet I don't dare sass one of them for fear of offending the old woman. It's not that I'm afraid of losing this sinecure of holding down a faded, moth-eaten and lopsided throne, you understand, but I'm liable to lose the only life I have—a life that is hemmed in by knockout drops and Paris green on every side. The daily menu of an Emperor of the Celestial Kingdom, for that's the queer nickname they've dubbed this fossilized realm, was composed by the chef of Hoop La Zip, one of my revered progenitors, some forty-nine centuries since, and it still goes as the mode. Everything is served to me in pairs, two chickens, two sturgeon's fins, two mice en brochette, and so on, and if I happen to relish a particular dish and eat heartily of it it is yanked away and never appears on the festive board again during my precarious but uneventful existence. That's another old rule that has long gray whiskers on it and ought to be rubbed off the slate. I cannot eat anything not registered on these ancient menu cards, and therefore I am

still grossly ignorant of the taste of such modern dainties as Welsh rabbits, hot tamales, green corn, pickles, Washington pie, sinkers or peach short-cake."

"Ah!" I exclaimed, "then you have never eaten a broiled frankfurter on toasted ice cream soda?"

"Never heard of them till Kang Yu Mei came back from Berlin with a letter from William Threestimes, telling me what I was missing by not making a kick and running my own Empire in a live, twentieth century manner, and I've dreamed ever since of German cooking till I wake up with my mouth watering like an overflowing bathtub. He sent me three or four hundred photographs of himself in different uniforms, and, will you believe me, I am not allowed to sit for my portrait



THE EMPEROR'S AMBITION.

I began by inquiring his opinion of the future of China.

"From the casual glimpses I am permitted to obtain," the Emperor said in reply, "I should say that as things are going China's future is rosy. Kang Yu Mei, my adviser and side partner, agrees with me in thinking that I can develop the country and bring it more up to date, so to speak."

"When a man wants to talk to me he has to spend forty-five minutes in gymnastic evolutions, turning flip-flops, hand springs and other contortions, before he opens his mouth, and then his time is up and he has to give way to another ap-



IN MEMORY OF HIS ANCESTORS.



"JUST LOOK!"

nor even permit a wandering Cook's tourist to take a snap at me with his three-dollar kodak. So I couldn't send Bill my picture. If you could sneak a sketch of me while you're here and get it in the paper I'd be tickled to death. Could you?"

"I've done it," I said, modestly, "but I suppose I'd better not show it to you."

"Not on your life! I'd love to see it, but they'd make it a criminal offence if I did. Now they can't find anything against me even with an X ray searchlight. Just make me a little taller and a few pounds stouter in the cut, eh?"

I assured him that I would do so.

STEPHEN CRANE IN HAVANA.

HE SEES THE COMIC SIDE OF THINGS.

HAVANA, Oct. 3.—The citizen of Havana has an extraordinary lack of what might be called the sense of public navigation. It is a common lack on all shores of the Mediterranean, and the dearth of it even extends to Paris, where it is always clear that a kind of special duty continually has to protect from the pain of collision all drivers of facres.

But there is no special duty for the people here. They are children of pellucid chance, and if Havana was a tub and they were a lot of rubber bulls prancing and bounding within they could not be more joyously irresponsible and incompetent.

An opportunity to view this matter to good advantage is given every Thursday and Sunday evening, when a band plays in the square. A great crowd attends, and with the lights and the music and all it is not unlike the board walk at Asbury Park, without the boards and without the sea.

If two friends meet face to face on Broadway their greeting, if begun in the middle of the stream, is never finished there. They instantly move to the curb or in to the walls, to the slack water. They always do it, and there is nothing marvellous about it. But you should see two friends meet here when, for instance, the band is playing in the plaza and a great crowd is strolling.

Well, for their ceremony of greeting, they camp indefinitely right in the middle of everything. Of course, in Spanish countries it is customary to express joy and welcome by rushing forward and at once engaging the other man in a catchweight wrestling contest.

Suppose that there are two hundred people coming along on the same route. They are stopped, bothered, compelled to change their gait and their course. But they say not a word. They move around the impediment in silence and patience. It does not occur to them—they have no necessity

for knowing—that traffic is blocked, as we say.

Nature is usually seeking to alleviate, to mend, but circumstance is always perverse, aggravating. The English are not a particularly amiable people; at least, they are not suave, and so circumstance provides them with a pattern of railway carriage which is the cruelest test of manners which life affords.

In Havana, where people do not comprehend public navigation, this perverse circumstance provides sidewalks from eighteen to forty inches wide, upon which only acrobats can make their way.

But, at any rate, a grand mystery of Spanish romance has been cleared for one mind, at any rate, by these Spanish sidewalks. In every one of those delightful tales there was a street scene in which a gallant cavalier going one way was met by a gallant cavalier going the other way. They stopped, then the first cavalier, twirling his mustache, said:

"Senor, I take the wall."

But the second cavalier, laying his hand upon his sword, invariably replied: "You are mistaken, senor. I take the wall."

Whereat they drew and fell upon each other like brave gentlemen, giving and receiving wounds in the groin, lungs, liver and heart, until one was down and after he had said, "Oh, I am dead," the other sheathed his sword and went home—taking the wall.

This fighting for the inside track for the privilege of passing next to the wall, was a mystery and an annoyance to my boyish mind. I wanted my hero to fight over the lady behind the lattice. Anything connected with that intrigue was good cause for the gore of cavaliers.

But to go out and fight with comparative strangers over the privilege of passing next to the wall, giving and receiving wounds in the groin, lungs, liver and heart, seemed a very pointless proceeding. But it is all plain at present. It was because the Spaniards had as much sense of public navigation as he has now, and because the sidewalks of Seville were only from eighteen to forty inches wide.

STEPHEN CRANE.

A PASTORAL TALE TOLD IN MUSIC.

A BOOK of new, short stories by Henryk Sienkiewicz is soon to appear. Its title is "Sienkiewicz's New Style."

The style of most of the stories is as different from that of "Quo Vadis" as day is from night. Let us take one of the shorter pieces. It has no plot, no plan. It is about two peasant children who lived in the woods and loved each other. That is all—they merely lived in the woods and loved. But when you read the story you inhale the fragrance of the forest and see the leaves waving in the breeze.

Here is a girl in a forest described almost in music: The clear brook wound among the trees. The lilies, rocked by the light movement of the water, swayed gently with their white flowers; bending toward one another, they seemed to kiss; above their broad leaves, which lay like shields on the surface of the water, dark sapphire-colored grasshoppers moved around in the air with broad and rustling wings, so delicate and

SIENKIEWICZ'S NEW STYLE.

slender that people call them "water maidens" justly; black butterflies, with white mourning borders, sat on the points of the flag.

In such a silence nymphs and rusalkas dwell usually, as well as other good and bad forest divinities. So when Kasia, who went ahead, stopped first on the bank and looked at the water, in which her charming, slender form was reflected, she might have seemed indeed a beautiful apparition of the woodland, such as foresters meet in the woods sometimes, or as bargemen meet when floating down among trees with their flat-boats. She was without a kerchief on her head; the wind had blown her tresses apart somewhat, and stirred the hair on her forehead. She was bright-haired and sunburnt; she had eyes smiling, but blue as star thistles, and lips also smiling. Besides, she was tall and slender, a perfect rusalka! Nobody would swear that, frightened by an eye, she would not spring into the water, or vanish in mist, in a rainbow, or in sunlight, that and strife and exciting adventure.

she would not change suddenly into a "fly" or a snowball, which, when thou shouldst wish to pluck it, would say in human speech, though in speech like the rustle of a tree—

"Touch me not!"

In vain did Kasia, standing on the edge of the brook with forget-me-nots in her hand, turn to that side whence the voice of the cuckoo had come, and inquire: "Cuckoo, oh, blue cuckoo, have I long to live?"

The cuckoo said nothing in answer.

"Cuckoo, shall I be rich?"

Then the fat boller (her lover) said: "Cuckoo, gray cuckoo, will my wedding come soon?"

The cuckoo said nothing.

"He will not answer," said Kasia. "Let us go back."

They went back—through poetry and music, and each step of their pastoral love-making is described in a delightful style. The book also contains stories of battle and strife and exciting adventure.

A Nursery Game for Republican Politicians.

THE WONDERFUL CANAL THAT BLACK BUILT.

With Davenport's Apology to Mother Goose.



THIS IS THE CANAL THAT BLACK BUILT.



3—THIS IS THE MAN THAT HANDLED THE DOUGH THAT WAS DROPPED INTO THE CANAL THAT BLACK BUILT.



4—THIS IS THE MAN THAT HANDLED THE DOUGH THAT WAS DROPPED INTO THE CANAL THAT BLACK BUILT.

THIS IS THE CHARGE UP SAN JUAN HILL THAT HAS NOTHING TO DO—AND NEVER WILL WITH THE MAN AND THE DOUGH AND THE FEES FOR THE TOW ON THE WONDERFUL CANAL THAT BLACK BUILT.



5—AND THIS IS THE MAN THAT CRIED IN THE VAN, "COME ON TO THE STRIFE!" BUT YOU BET YOUR LIFE HE HASN'T BEEN HEARD TO UTTER A WORD ABOUT THE MAN THAT HANDLED THE MAN AND THE DOUGH AND THE CANAL THAT BLACK BUILT.